"Now to him who is able to keep *you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy, to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen." Jude 24,25*

As was often the case in the early New Testament churches, as it is today, false teachers and false believers who lead people away from God's truth were quite common. New Testament letters, such as Colossians, I Timothy, II Peter, and Jude, among others, indicate that this problem in the early churches needed immediate attention. False teachers posed a significant issue in the church at Ephesus, prompting the Apostle Paul, in his letter to his trusted friend Timothy, to urge him to remain there to deal with the matter. This is of such importance to the apostle that he doesn't delay in addressing his concerns. He writes in the opening of his first letter to Timothy, "As I urged you when I was going to Macedonia, remain at Ephesus so that you may charge certain persons not to teach any different doctrine, nor to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies which promote speculations rather than the stewardship from God that is by faith." (I Tim. 1:3). In Paul's letter to Titus, chapter one, he teaches that one of the qualifications necessary to hold the office of an elder in the church is the ability to refute those who teach false doctrines. Writing to Titus, the Apostle Paul states that an overseer (or elder) "must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to instruct sound doctrine and rebuke those who contradict it." (Titus 1:9). In the following two sentences of the same letter, we learn why this is critical for the early church and the Christian Church throughout all ages. "For there are many who are insubordinate, empty talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision party. They must be silenced, since they are upsetting whole families by teaching for shameful gain what they ought not to teach." (Titus 1:10,11).

The result of false teaching is always incorrect thinking, which leads to improper living. In this short letter written by Jude, false teachings and false Christians were prominent problems. It was such a significant issue that Jude, whose intention was to write about salvation in Christ, thought it best instead to encourage believers to hold fast to the pure word of truth. The author reveals his thoughts in verse 3, where we see his decision to change course. He writes, "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." Then, in verse 4, Jude explains that many ungodly people (false teachers) are already present in the assembly! It would appear they had already infiltrated the church without people being aware of their false teachings! "For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ." (Jude 4).

For most of his letter, Jude elaborates on ungodly behaviors exhibited by individuals he highlights for his readers. In verses 5-7, he mentions specific historical events that illustrate how God will judge and punish the ungodly. In this section, the unbelieving Israelites are brought to our attention. He writes, “Now I want to remind you, although you once fully knew it, that Jesus, who saved a people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe. Moreover, the angels who did not stay within their own position of authority, but left their proper dwelling, he has kept in eternal chains under gloomy darkness until the judgment of the great day— just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities, which likewise indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural desire, serve as an example by undergoing a punishment of eternal fire. (Jude 5-7). This, of course, is meant to serve as a stern warning to all that one must never take the grace of God for granted. God is holy and will judge the wicked who reject Him. Later in the letter, Jude offers perhaps his clearest rebuke when he describes evil people who had entered the assembly of the church: “These are hidden reefs at your love feasts, as they feast with you without fear, shepherds feeding themselves” (Jude 12). In this sentence, “These” refers to the false teachers leading people away from Christ. Until verse 19, Jude makes it clear that God will judge the wicked.

At verses 17 and 20, the author's words indicate a clear shift in topic and tone. It features one of those remarkable Greek conjunctions (δὲ), often found in the New Testament and translated in English as a “but” statement. In the New Testament, the conjunction typically follows a vivid description of wickedness and how God will judge them. The NT writers often change their thoughts and declare some aspect of God's amazing grace. Ephesians 2:1-4 is a classic example: there, the apostle in chapter 2, verses 1-3, describes all people outside of a saving relationship with Christ as being “dead in trespasses and sins.” Then in verse 4, we have that wonderful “but” statement: “**But** God, being rich in mercy because of His great love with which He loved us.” In a very similar manner, Jude, writing in verse 17, follows his description of the false teachers, stating, “But you must remember, beloved...”

Furthermore, verse 20 includes another “**but**” statement, “But you, beloved...” Dear Christian, all praise and thanks be to God for these wonderful “**but**” statements in His blessed Word! They are meant to encourage and remind believers of God’s great love and mercy! They also reassure believers that although the wicked may prosper, God will keep and protect His people. At the letter’s opening, Jude had already addressed those he writes to as “beloved in God.” From verse 20 onward, he encourages believers in Christ in their daily walk with their Savior. He urges true believers to strengthen their faith, enhance their prayers, and deepen their love for God. It is a passionate call to persevere in the Christian life! No longer are there warnings about false teachers and heretics. In these final few verses, Jude focuses on what believers should be doing themselves. Then, closing the letter,

as we shall see in his wonderful doxology (v. 24, 25), he highlights the great work of God's grace for the believer. It is a wonderful benediction intended to assure believers and praise the Lord Jesus Christ. Many believers have found great assurance and peace since this was written. Since the time of the apostles, countless worship services have concluded with these blessed words!

We see, then, that in light of what Jude has written about those who have turned away from God's truth and "followed after their own lusts" (verse 18), and in light of what he has said about the people who "are grumblers, malcontents, following their own desires…" (verse 16). He now concludes by writing, "**but you"**, God's dear and precious people, take comfort in knowing that God is able to keep you from stumbling' (verse 24). To His glory and praise, Almighty God will keep you from following the pathway of the prevailing sins of the times. Although we, as believers, often stumble due to remaining sin, you, who are called beloved by God, will undoubtedly be preserved by Him and ultimately presented in heaven, blameless, with great joy! All due to the great Savior of sinners! The profound truth and promise that God will keep His elect children, whom He chose before the "foundation of the world" (Eph. 1:4), is a recurring theme in the Word of God. Sadly, it is a truth often misunderstood in God's Word. When applied appropriately, this theme provides believers in Christ peace and assurance.

Jude begins his doxology with the phrase: "**Now to Him who is able to keep you**." (Jude 24). Although Jude has penned some difficult words in this letter to expose false teachers, it is clear that he does not wish to conclude on that note. Instead, he desires to finish his letter by providing comfort and assurance to the saints and offering praise and honor to the God of heaven. His first word of assurance is to remind Christians that they are being kept! He has already done this once before! In the letter's opening greeting, Jude tells all Christ's people that God the Father is at work. He tells them what the nature of the work is. This work is to keep them for God the Son! He writes in verse 1, "To those who are called, beloved in God the Father, and kept for Jesus Christ." The Greek word translated "keep" in the ESV is often rendered as "guard" in other places of Scripture. Did you know, Christian, that the Lord is guarding your soul? When the Holy Spirit opens a person's heart and causes them to be "born again" (John 3:3), they can be assured of eternal life! They need not doubt at all! Oh yes, the evil one will try to make them doubt that God's Word is true! Oh yes, the battle against sin will continue throughout life! The believer, though, can and must rest on the precious words of Christ: "I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. I and the Father are one." (John 10:28-30). Can any better words be spoken to a believer struggling with the assurance of their salvation? Dear Christian reader who is struggling with the assurance of salvation, trust in Jesus and His Word! Do not let your feelings control what

you know is a rock-solid truth! God has promised to keep you! The devil is a liar and will try to make you feel guilty. However, Jesus has taken that guilt to the cross! He paid the price in full for your salvation and declared from the cross, "It is finished." (John 19:30).

Throughout history, believers have turned to the Psalms to find peace and assurance from God's Word. The Psalms often highlight the theme of God keeping or guarding His people. Notice the repetition of this comforting truth in bold type in Psalm 121.

"I lift up my eyes to the hills.
From where does my help come?
My help comes from the Lord,
who made heaven and earth.
He will not let your foot be moved;
he who keeps you will not slumber.
Behold**, he who keeps Israel**
will neither slumber nor sleep.
The **Lord is your keeper**;
the Lord is your shade on your right hand.
The sun shall not strike you by day,
nor the moon by night.
The **Lord will keep you** from all evil;
he will keep your life.
The **Lord will keep**
your going out and your coming in
from this time forth and forevermore."

In the Old and New Testaments, our Sovereign God, who rules over all things, delights in guarding and keeping the souls of His people. If, by faith, you are united with Jesus Christ, you are His bride. Any man preparing for marriage will tell you how precious his bride is to him. It is the same with our Savior! When Jesus was about to go to the cross, His concern was for His Bride, for all those who would believe in Him, that the Father would keep them. Observe the repetition of the theme of keeping and guarding in His high priestly prayer. He prayed, "And I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, **keep them** in your name, which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one. While I was with them, **I kept them** in your name, which you gave me. **I have guarded them**, and not one of them has been lost except the son of destruction, that the Scripture might be fulfilled." (John 17:11-12). Christian, if God, out of the abundance of His love and power, is keeping you for eternal life, how then should you live your life right now?

In the next phase of this wonderful doxology, Jude reveals what believers are kept from: they are kept "**from stumbling**." The Greek word Jude uses here for stumbling (ἁπταίστους aptaistos) is unique because it appears only once in the New Testament. Some translations prefer the word "falling." On a positive note, the word can also be translated as 'standing firm.' In either case, Jude refers to not falling away from the Christian faith while simultaneously standing firm in Christ. In the ancient Greek language, the concept of ἁπταίστους is frequently expressed through metaphor, particularly when describing moral or spiritual steadfastness. For example, a person or soul is metaphorically likened to a sure-footed horse or a path that does not cause stumbling, emphasizing blamelessness or faultlessness. The Christian is sure-footed because the Lord Jesus Christ is their solid rock! The psalmist knew this very well. He writes, "Truly he is my rock and my salvation; he is my fortress, I will not be shaken. My salvation and my honor depend on God; he is my mighty rock, my refuge." (Psalm 62:6-7).

The world, flesh, and the devil will do everything possible to cause believers to fall into grievous sins. They will do anything to see that a person who claims to be a Christian no longer holds to their beliefs. However, for the individual truly regenerated and in Christ, a final falling away is impossible because they are blood-bought believers! Their salvation is secure! How precious and assuring this truth should be to all who love the Lord Jesus! Some may ask, does that mean that since my salvation is secure, I can live as I please without worrying about consequences? Of course not! If you believe that, it is evidence that you do not know the grace of God! The Apostle Paul was concerned about this very matter. In his letter to the Romans, he stated, "when sin abounds, grace does much more abound" (Rom. 5:20). If anyone who reads that has the notion that they may as well sin to get more grace, the apostle then writes, "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" (Romans 6:1-2). The Apostle John reaches this same conclusion when he writes, "No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in him, and he cannot keep on sinning because he has been born of God." (1 John 3:9). John is NOT saying the believer is sinless! We know that because in the same letter he wrote, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us." (1 John 1:8). He is, however, stating that it is not the Christian's desire to continue sinning! Oh, what a glorious truth!

The Lord Jesus is your rock of safety! He is a refuge from the world, the flesh, and the evil one! Take heart, dear Christian! The Lord Jesus Christ will keep you from stumbling! Listen and take encouragement from the words of the beloved commentator Matthew Henry. "All real sincere believers shall be presented at the Lord Redeemer's appearance and reward. They were given to him by the Father. Of all that were so given to him he has lost none, nor will lose anyone, not an individual, a single soul, but will present

them all perfectly holy and happy, when he shall surrender his mediatorial kingdom to "his God and our God, his Father and our Father." (John 6:39).

Not only will the Lord keep the believer from falling, but Jude writes that the Savior will "**present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy**." There will come a time, as the Lord Jesus taught, on the day of judgment, when each person must stand before God to give an account. The blessed truth is that all in Christ will be declared blameless! How can that be? It is because Christ has taken upon Himself our sin! He is our substitute! His perfect obedience and righteousness have been credited to the Christian's account! This is what justification means. What amazing grace and love! The Christian has given their guilt and shame to Christ, who gives them His righteousness! No wonder it is called the "Great Exchange" by many! Once again, listen to Matthew Henry's encouraging words to believers. "When believers shall be presented faultless, it will be with exceeding joy. Alas! Now our faults fill us with fears, doubts, and sorrow. However, be of good cheer; if we be sincere, we shall be, … presented faultless!"

If you struggle with assurance, dear Christian, look to the cross where the blameless one suffered and died so that you may be declared blameless! What a glorious truth! No wonder the apostle can write, "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." (Romans 8:1). Dear reader, do you know this great Savior? I am not asking whether you know about Him, but rather if you know Him. If not, please, I pray, "believe upon the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved." (Acts 16:31). Call out to Him in prayer to open your heart! Jesus invites you to come and is more than willing to welcome all who cry out to Him! He says, "Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." (Matthew 11:28).

The Christian will one day stand in the presence of their Savior and be filled with "**great joy**." Through the work and fruit of the Holy Spirit, believers in Christ can and do experience joy in this sin-cursed world. However, the sinful nature is still present, and all too often raises its ugly head! Nothing will diminish the joy that the believer will possess in the presence of the Savior! This will be a lasting joy that will never depart! How glorious a thought! No more doubt! No more sadness! No more feelings of guilt! No more depression! No more tears! Only joyful bliss standing in the presence of God's glory with great joy! "And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them; they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away." (Revelation 21:3-4). All the sin and evil that weigh us down today will be no more! Our great God will dwell with His people forever and ever! Dear reader, do you long for a truly inexpressible joy? If so, call out to the Savior. Open His Word and pray for the light that

comes from the Holy Spirit. This is the promise of the Lord. “These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full." (John 15:11).

Having offered words of assurance and comfort to the beloved in Christ, Jude now turns to conclude his letter. He desires to end on a note of praise to the “**only God**”! These words reflect the distinctive Jewish heritage of the author, are founded upon the Pentateuch, and would have been very familiar to the readers of Jude’s letter. It was the confession of all faithful Israelites. “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one.” (Deuteronomy 6:4). The Apostles continued this proclamation in their writings, revealed in the New Testament. One example is John 17:3, “And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.”

Jude's second designation in his closing statement is “**our Savior**.” This label, also familiar to the Jews, was used in the call of “Hosanna,” which means “Save Now.” Using this name for God in the Old Testament is common, especially in the Psalms. We frequently see the phrase “God of our salvation” (Psalm 64:6). This practice is also evident outside the book of Psalms. For instance, the prophet Isaiah, speaking as the Lord’s mouthpiece, writes of the Savior, “For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior” (Isaiah 43:3). In the New Testament, it is, of course, connected to the Lord Jesus Christ.

To all who are weary and burdened by sin in their lives, how precious it is to declare in faith that Jesus is Savior! The Apostle Paul often used this phrase at the beginning of his epistles, addressing churches or individuals. An example is the opening to his letter to his friend Titus. He writes, “To Titus, my true child in a common faith: Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus **our Savior**.” (Titus 1:4). Dear reader, are you able to proclaim in your heart and to those around you that Jesus Christ is your Savior? If not, I urge you to call upon the name of Jesus Christ and receive, by faith, the forgiveness of sins. A prison guard in the ancient city of Philippi needed to understand how he could be saved from his sins after hearing Paul preach and witnessing God’s hand in opening the prison gates. He was greatly convicted of his need for a savior. This is the account of his conversion in the book of Acts 16:30-34. “Then he brought them out and said, ‘Sirs, what must I do to be saved?’ And they said, ‘Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.’ And they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their wounds; he and all his family were baptized at once. Then he brought them up into his house and set food before them. And he rejoiced along with his entire household that he had believed in God.” Friend, what about you? Do you feel your need for acceptance and peace with God because of sin in your life? Please know there is a Savior for you! Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you too will rejoice in His love and mercy! “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal

life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God." (John 3:16-18).

Adding to this final statement of praise, Jude includes, "**through Jesus Christ our Lord.**" "Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy, to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord…". How do we understand Jude's meaning when using this phrase? Believers in Christ seek to give glory and honor to God through Jesus! In the Westminster Shorter Catechism, the first question is, "What is the chief end of man?" The answer is, "Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever." The Christian glorifies God by believing in and obeying the Lord Jesus Christ. Followers of Christ seek to praise God through their Savior. The work of the Lord Jesus gives believers access to the throne of grace (Hebrews 4:16) in prayer. It is through Jesus Christ our Lord, and in His name that we pray. This is what Jesus taught. "Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it." John 14:13-14.

Jude concludes the doxology by reflecting on what has been, what now is, and what will always belong to Jesus Christ alone: "**glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever.**" We begin with "**glory**." Biblical glory refers to the manifested presence of God. His character, attributes, and essence are visibly expressed or revealed. In the Old Testament, the Hebrew word often translated as "glory" is *kabod*, which literally means "weight" or "heaviness," signifying something of great significance and value. Nothing can be more significant or valuable than the Triune God! Throughout all eternity, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit share eternal honor and glory; this will never change! Writing, to the ancient Greek church at Philippi, Paul the Apostle teaches that there will come a time when "at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." (Phil. 2:10-11). There is now and always will be joyful praise and honor given to the Savior in heaven. Listen to what they are saying in heaven even now! "Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created." (Revelation 4:11).

"**Majesty**" - The term "majesty" comes from the Latin *maiestas*, meaning greatness or dignity. In the original Hebrew, the word expresses the idea of being raised up or exalted, signifying God's exalted status and the praise and honor due to Him. The psalmist wrote, "The LORD reigns; he is robed in majesty." (Psalm 93:1). In other words, the author proclaims the exalted nature of the eternal and Sovereign God! Metaphorically speaking, he

declares that God is “clothed” with these attributes! He is high and lifted up above all His works of creation! This is the language God uses to describe Himself. “For thus says the One who is high and lifted up, who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: “I dwell in the high and holy place, and also with him who is of a contrite and lowly spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly, and to revive the heart of the contrite.” (Isaiah 57:15). Biblical majesty is closely tied to God's kingship, sovereign rule, and absolute authority. 1 Chronicles 29:11 declares, "Yours, O Lord, is the greatness, the power, the glory, the victory, and the majesty... Yours is the kingdom, O Lord, and you are exalted as head above all."

“Dominion” - When the Bible states that God has dominion, it indicates that the triune God possesses all power, authority, and rule over all creation. God's dominion is characterized by His sovereign control, righteousness, love, and justice. This is evident throughout Scripture, as in Psalm 145:13: "Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures throughout all generations." God's dominion is everlasting and never changes. His dominion is consistently used for the good of His creation, unlike human rulers, who may abuse their authority. No wonder Jude highlights this aspect of God’s attributes, in addition to glory and majesty, in his doxology!

“Authority” - The Scripture teaches that the triune God possesses sovereign authority over all His creation. His authority is consistently exercised alongside His attributes of love, wisdom, mercy, and justice. The author of 1 Chronicles succinctly conveys this great truth in 1 Chronicles 29:11-12. “Yours, O Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty, for all that is in the heavens and in the earth is yours. Yours is the kingdom, O Lord, and you are exalted as head above all. Both riches and honor come from you, and you rule overall. In your hand are power and might, and in your hand, it is to make great and to give strength to all.” Any authority given to man has its foundation in the authority of God. The Lord Jesus Christ has all authority. In the commission Jesus gave to His disciples, we are told that because of His sovereign authority, the Gospel will go out to the earth! “And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” (Matthew 28:18-20).

“Before all time and now and forever.” Jude closes his praise by focusing on God's eternality, which is frequently referenced in the Word of God to assist and comfort those who trust in Him. There are numerous examples! “The eternal God is your dwelling place, and underneath are the everlasting arms.” (Deuteronomy 33:27). "The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable.” (Isaiah 40:28).

Dear reader, the God of the Bible, who is the one true and living God, has always existed. He knows the end from the beginning and has ruled all things from all eternity! He never changes! He knows and loves you completely. This great God invites every one of us to humble ourselves and trust in Him. His love and kindness are infinite. His justice is perfect in every way. He will judge sinners who do not turn away from their sin. If you do not know Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, I implore you to seek Him with all your heart. Pray to Him. All Scripture is inspired by God, but if you are not familiar with the Bible, I recommend starting your reading at the Gospel of John, found in the New Testament. As you read, pray! Ask the Holy Spirit to open your spiritual eyes. He will do so as you sincerely seek the truth. I end this brief devotional with the Apostle Paul's words to his young friend and disciple, Timothy. May God bless you with His love and grace.

> "To the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen." (1 Timothy 1:17)